



# **The WisDOT Connector *Express***

August 24, 2006 ... Volume 7, Issue 11

## **A "sign" of things to come this campaign season**

With fall campaigns gearing up, WisDOT officials are reminding political candidates and campaign volunteers that state law prohibits the placement of signs, including campaign signs, on the right-of-way along all numbered state, federal and interstate highways. State highway right-of-way in rural areas generally extends to beyond shoulders, ditches and any adjoining fence line. In urban areas along the state highway system, signs are prohibited from the roadway area to at least one foot past the sidewalk. In urban areas without sidewalks, signs must be at least 15 feet from the pavement edge. Signs are not allowed within highway medians. With the landowner's consent, political signs are allowed on private property without a billboard permit as long as the signs do not exceed 32 square feet in size and contain no flashing lights or moving parts. WisDOT has suspended enforcement of a provision that had limited when political signs may be displayed. "This is primarily a highway safety issue," explains Dave Vieth, Director of WisDOT's Bureau of Highway Operations. "People placing signs along highway right-of-way are risking their own safety and such signs can also distract motorists or obstruct their view." More information on this topic can be found on the WisDOT Web site at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/property-signs-political.htm>.

## **Nationwide initiative cracking down on drunken driving**

As part of a nationwide effort, the Wisconsin State Patrol and local law enforcement agencies are participating in a nationwide crackdown on drunken driving. The "Drunk Driving-Over the Limit. Under Arrest" crackdown runs Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> through the Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> Labor Day Holiday and combines high-visibility law enforcement with a media campaign to combat impaired driving. In 2005, alcohol-related crashes in Wisconsin killed 331 people and injured nearly 6,000.

## **State Patrol welcomes 20 new members**

A total of 20 cadets will receive their badges as State Patrol troopers and inspectors at a State Capitol graduation ceremony Friday (August 25<sup>th</sup>). The ceremony concludes about five months of intense training at the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy at Fort McCoy. Of the 20 graduates, 16 will serve as troopers enforcing traffic safety and criminal laws, while four will work as inspectors focusing on commercial motor carrier (large truck and bus) safety laws. Cadets receive comprehensive training that includes traffic and criminal law, ethics, defense and arrest tactics, firearms marksmanship, emergency vehicle operations, crisis management and traffic crash investigations.

## **Hiawatha keeps delivering passengers, smashing records**

They say that records are made to be broken and ridership aboard Amtrak's Hiawatha Service trains is a perfect example. In July, Hiawatha trains carried 55,706 riders, setting a new, all-time ridership record for any month, smashing the old record set in August 2005 (51,891). Ridership through July of this calendar year is 331,445 – an increase of over 10 percent from the same period last year. If current ridership trends continue, the Hiawatha will finish the year with approximately 600,000 riders. Hiawatha Service trains provide seven daily round trips between Milwaukee and Chicago with the best on-time performance of any Amtrak route. A trip between the two cities takes about 90 minutes. As of August 1<sup>st</sup>, a one-way Hiawatha fare increased by \$1 to \$21 – the first Hiawatha fare increase in five years. Commuters can now board the Hiawatha at the new Sturtevant rail station that opened August 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming events**

September 5-8 – Wisconsin State Bicycle and Pedestrian Summit, Madison

Check [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news/events/index.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news/events/index.htm) for more event listings and details.

*The WisDOT Connector Express* is produced by:

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